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ABSTRACT

The report is a comparison of the economic, housing, and educational status of Latin Americans and Anglos based on the 1970 U.S. Census. This report provides factual data to organizations and institutions in need of it. This includes firms adopting affirmative action employment programs, private and public institutions, and social agencies which need such documentation to support funding applications. Another purpose of the report is to further motivate the social conscience of the community to reduce inequalities between Latin and Anglo and to promote integration and reconciliation. The report is presented in a question and answer form. The 22 questions cover such areas as: (1) What percent of Holland, Michigan, residents in the labor force speak Spanish? (2) Is Holland an integrated community? (3) How does the average income of Latin families contrast with that of the entire community? (4) Does the typical value of homes owned by Latin families differ much from the estimated value of the average owner in Holland? (5) Are there differences in the formal education of Latin Americans and Anglos in Holland? (FF)

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LATINO AND ANGLO IN HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

A Report by the Holland Human Relations Commission
City Hall
Holland, Michigan 49423

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A comparison of their economic, housing and educational characteristics based on data from the 1970 U.S. census

A report by the Holland Human Relations Commission
City Hall
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What percentage of Holland residents are Latin Americans?

About 9%. The Census Bureau estimates from questions asked a 15% sample receiving the long form of the Census in April of 1970 that about 1,800 Holland residents were living in homes where the Spanish language was spoken by husband, wife or both, and that about 2,100 were of Spanish origin or descent. Thus they estimate that about 7% of Holland's 26,000 + residents could be classified as "Spanish language" persons, and that about 8% were of Spanish descent. Almost 90% of the 1,800 Spanish language persons were of Spanish mother tongue, meaning they grew up in homes where Spanish was spoken.

Statistics in the remainder of this report are based on data from the "Spanish language" sample. These census figures do not include any change in the population in the 2½ years since the census data were gathered.

Is there reason to believe the Spanish language population is changing?

It appears to be growing slowly. The percentage of minority children in Holland publis schools is growing about 1% a year - from 9% in the fall of 1968 to 13% in 1971. These school statistics may actually give a better picture of the Latin population since they are based on a complete head count rather than a 15% sample. For example, in the school year during which the census was taken, there were about 580 Spanish surname children in elementary and junior high schools in Holland (including Holland's parochial schools and excluding Federal and Harrington schools which lie outside the City). In Kent and Ottawa counties, 29% of the total Spanish language population was in the 10 year age span covered by the elementary and junior high school years. Multiplying 580 X 100/29, we get about 2,000, another estimate of the Latin American population within the city limits. This also provides some validation of the census figures. Using the same procedures we estimate that the Latin population had grown by about 200 from the fall of 1970 to the fall of 1972 or to about 9% as of today.

What percent of Holland residents in the labor force are of Spanish language?

This is a question of more than academic interest, since affirmative action employment programs seeking to up-grade the employment status of disadvantaged minority groups need some baseline estimates of minority population to use in establishing goals. For example, the City Manager has indicated to the Human Relations Commission that

although selection for ability or potential must always be primary, "every effort will be made to work toward a reasonable representation in General City activities with respect to racial and ethnic composition of the community". But what minority representation would be fairly representative of the community labor force?

The census estimates that among Holland residents who were above age 16 and in the labor force, about 6% were Spanish language persons. Again, this figure does not include growth since April of 1970 and it does not include Spanish surnamed persons from homes where neither husband nor wife speaks Spanish. It also does not include labor force statistics from persons residing outside of Holland but working in Holland.

Why is this figure slightly lower than the Latin percentage in the total population?

The median age of Spanish language persons about (18 years) is younger than that of the total community (about 26 years). In other words, about one-half of the Spanish language population of Holland is under 20 years of age. This means that the percentage of Latin children is somewhat greater than the total Latin percentage and that the percentage of Latin adults is somewhat less. Of young persons newly entering the labor force, probably at least 10% are from Spanish language homes.

Is Holland an integrated community?

Yes and no. Yes, in that Holland has no isolated "barrio", no neatly defined Spanish language neighborhood. The census tract with the highest proportion of Spanish language families (between River Avenue and Kollen Park north of 16th Street) was composed of about 1/4 Spanish language families and 3/4 non-Spanish language families. Furthmore, non-minority students have been in the majority at every elemtary school in Holland.

But there are also large areas of Holland which were not integrated. No Spanish language families appeared in the 15% sample in the following areas of Holland: Holland Heights, that portion of Holland lying in Allegan County (south of 32nd Street), and that portion of Holland lying west of Graafschaap Road. Almost every Spanish language family in Holland resides within about a mile and one-half of Hope College. In fact, since about 2/3 of Spanish language persons in Ottawa County reside within the City limits of Holland, it may also be said that the majority of Spanish language residents

of Ottawa County live within walking distance of Hope College.

The Latin American population of Holland is said to be comprised of persons of Cuban, Mexican, and Puerto-Rican origin. What are the relative proportions of each?

The overwhelming majority of Spanish language persons in Holland are Mexican-American (Chicano). The Census Bureau estimates that one-third of Holland's Spanish language citizens were either born in Mexico or had a parent born in Mexico. About 100 to 150 persons are estimated to be of Puerto Rican birth or parentage and only a small handfull (8) are estimated to be of Cuban birth or parentage. This latter figure is most certainly the result of a sampling error since there are a number of known Cuban families in Holland.

This sampling error also illustrates a feature of the census data which the reader should keep in mind: the smaller the number of respondents an estimate is based upon, the more likely it is to be in error. When a question, below, pertains to only a sub-group of the Spanish language population (e.g. renters, Cuban origin persons, those in a particular age range,) you should have less confidence in the accuracy of the data than when the estimate is based on all Spanish language persons in the sample. Another thing to keep in mind is that the average person described in this report is only a statistical average. The average Holland woman above age 35 has given birth to 3.3 children, but no Holland woman has had 3.3 children!

These same statistics also indicate that the majority of Holland's Spanish language persons have lived in America for at least two generations, and that almost 90% are native born Americans. The vast majority are Americans of Mexican descent; few are Mexican.

Is the typical Spanish language family quite new to Holland?

No, it is estimated that more than 2/3 were living in the Grand Rapids-Holland area five years ago. Slightly over 3/4 of all Holland families were living in this area five years ago.

What is the black population of Holland?

Black people comprised 0.4% of Holland's population in April, 1970. About one-half of this black population of 86 persons was Hope College students.

It has been said that there is a black community north of Holland. How large is this?

The black population in Ottawa County outside of Holland is also quite small. There were 353 black persons in all of the county including Hope and Grand Valley students. In 1970, about 99% of Ottawa County residents were white; this includes Latin American persons who are also classified as white or caucasian. In every census tract in Ottawa County the black population was less than 2%. This includes the census tract which covers Olive Township, Port Sheldon Township, and the northern half of Holland Township, in which 79 black persons resided.

How does the average income of Spanish language families contract with the average family income of the entire community?

The median 1969 family income reported by Holland families was about $10,200. The median family income for Spanish language families in Holland was about $8,750. The same figures for the County are $10,445 for the whole County and $8,386 for Spanish language families. These are comparisons of total family income, not average income by Latin and Anglo individuals. The median income of employed Holland males in 1969 was about $7,800 compared with $5,500 for Spanish language males.

About 5% of Holland families reported 1969 family income below the poverty level compared to 12% of Spanish language families. Yet, it appears that over 90% of Spanish language families were not receiving public assistance (welfare).

Are Spanish language persons distributed across occupational categories in a manner similar to other persons in the Holland labor forces?

No, only about 2% of Spanish language employees residing in Holland were in professional, technical, managerial or sales positions. This is another estimate based on a small sample and hence subject to error. By contrast, about 31% of all employed Holland residents fell in those categories.

Do many Spanish language families own their homes?

Yes, about 60% do. About 77% of all housing units in Holland are owner occupied.

Does the typical value of homes owned by Latin families differ much from the estimated value of the average owner occupied house in Holland?

The median estimated value of owner occupied homes in Holland was around $15,000 as of 1970. The median (middle) value is not distorted upward by a few very expensive homes. The median estimated value of homes owned by Spanish language families was about $9,400.

Does the average rent paid by Latin and Anglo tenants differ by much?

Apparently not. Both averaged about $100.00 per month, including utilities, or about $80 per month in contract rent. There is no way of knowing if the quality of the units is also equal.

Is the average age of housing units occupied by Latin and Anglo families about the same?

No. About 90% of Spanish language families live in housing units constructed before 1950. By comparison, about 65% of Holland's housing units were constructed prior to 1950.

Is there any difference in the average size of the family living in Latin and Anglo housing units?

Yes. Spanish language households in the sample contained an average of 5.2 persons. The average Holland household contained 3.1 persons. These figures include persons other than the immediate family who may also reside there (e.g. grandparents). About 9% of all Holland families are headed by a female (without husband) compared to about 13% among Spanish language families. Apparently family stability is approximately comparable among Holland's Latinos and Anglos.

Are there differences in the formal education of Spanish language and other Holland persons?

Yes, the biggest Latin-Anglo gap of all was their differing educational attainments. Among all Holland residents over age 25 about 52% graduated from high school. The median number of school years completed was 12.1. Among Spanish language persons over 25 about 9% had graduated from high school. The median number of school years completed was one-half that of the rest of the population, about 6.1 years.

But is there still a difference if we look just at the younger people finishing their school years?

The difference is smaller, since educational attainments are increasing for all elements in the population. But the Latin-Anglo gap is still great. Among all Holland males age 16 to 21 years, about 8% were not high school graduates and not enrolled in school. The same was true of 11% of 16 to 21 year old Ottawa County residents. Among Holland's Spanish language males age 16 to 21, about 5 times as many (44%) has not graduated and were not in school. However, this 44% figure is a crude estimate since it is based on a very small sample of respondents.

In the state as a whole, are the black and Spanish language minorities quite similar on the characteristics analyzed in this report?

Economically and educationally, the black and Spanish language minorities are quite comparable. In comparison to the remainder of Michigan residents, both groups have completed fewer school years. Among 16 to 21 year old males, about twice as many in both groups have not graduated and are not attending high school as compared with non-minority 16 to 21 year olds. Both black and Spanish language minorities have an average per capita income about 30% less than the average Michigan resident, although more black families have income below the poverty line. The unemployment rate among Spanish language persons was about midway between that among other white persons and among black persons.

Despite these economic and educational disadvantages, there is a remarkable family solidarity among Spanish language families. Among all Michigan families, 8% are headed by a female. Among black families 25% are headed by a female. Among Spanish language families, only 8% are headed by a female. Among all Michigan women having at least one child of pre-school age, 72% are not working. Among black women with pre-school children, 55% are not working. Among Spanish language women with a preschool child, 3/4ths (74%) are not working.

Compared with the Spanish language population of the whole state, is the condition of residents of Holland more or less favorable?

It is less favorable. The difference between the 1969 median income of Anglo and of Latin males in the state was $1,100 ($9,000 vs. $7,900). In Holland the difference was about double - $2,300 ($7,800 vs. $5,500).

About two percent of Spanish language employees residing in Holland were estimated to be engaged in professional, technical, managerial or slaes work. In the state as a whole, 20% of Spanish language employees were engaged in such work.

The Census Bureau estimates that the median number of school years completed by Spanish language persons over 25 was 10.5 years in Michigan, but only 6.1 years in Holland; that 25% of 16 to 21 year old Spanish language males in Michigan were not in school and had not graduated from high school, compared with 44% in Holland; and that whereas 85% of 16 and 17 year old Spanish language persons in Michigan were enrolled in school, only 68% in Holland were enrolled.

It should be remembered that these figures are subject to error since the Holland data are estimates based on small samples.

Why is this information being published?

For two reasons. The first is to provide factual data to organizations and institutions in need of it. This includes firms adopting affirmative action employment programs and private and public institutions and social agencies which need to provide such documentation in support of applications for funding. All the figures reported should be considered as rough estimates since they are based not on the whole population but on the 15% receiving one of the longer forms.

The second reason is to further motivate the social conscience of our community to do everything in its power to reduce the inequalities between Latin and Anglo and to promote integration and reconciliation. A community-wide commitment to these goals may mean that in the years ahead Holland can enjoy its rich and diverse cultural heritage without experiencing the disharmony that has plagued many other communities. To stimulate public attention and discussion on these concerns we are making this information available to any individual or group requesting it. Perhaps your group or organization may want to consider making recommendations or taking action based on these data.

What is the Human Relations Commission?

The commission was created in 1966 by City Council and consists of 15 citizens appointed by the Mayor with the approval of Council to serve staggered three year terms. Its chartered purpose is to:

> promote amicable relations and mutual respect between and among the racial, cultural, religious and other groups within the Greater Holland Community; make investigations and studies which will aid in furthering the purpose of this article; cooperate with and aid in the coordination of the activities of other public and private organizations in efforts to improve relationships and conditions among the citizens of the Greater Holland area; assemble, analyze and disseminate factual data, information and materials of educational value relating to intergroup relations; advise and consult with the City Council and other public or quasi-public bodies on matters within its scope of activity; and effectuate the public policy states in Section 2-19 and concern itself with cultural, economic, educational and other matters contributing to a harmonious society.

The commission is eager to provide any service it can within the scope of its activities, including assistance in providing speakers or discussion leaders on matters related to human relations in our community. The commission may be contacted by mail or by calling Mr. Alfredo Gonzales in the City Manager's Office, 396-1827.